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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. ESPAILLAT).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
March 12, 2019.

I hereby appoint the Honorable ADRIANO ESPAILLAT to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 3, 2019, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties. All time shall be equally allocated between the parties, and in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m. Each Member, other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip, shall be limited to 5 minutes.

END HUNGER NOW

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, in September 2017, Puerto Rico was hit by two major hurricanes, Irma and Maria, both of which caused catastrophic damage, displaced thousands of families, and killed almost 3,000 American citizens. Adding insult to injury, the Trump administration organized an embarrassingly slow and ineffective response during Puerto Rico's time of need.

Last July, FEMA released a report acknowledging many of their shortcomings in responding to Hurricane Maria. And I am sure we all remember images of the President tastelessly throwing paper towels at families during his relief visit, as if he were shooting free throws at a basketball game.

It has been a year and a half since Hurricane Maria, and Puerto Rico has made incredible strides to rebuild, but many, many families are still struggling. These are American citizens who pay taxes and who work hard, just like mainland Americans, but for some reason, the Trump administration is having a hard time empathizing.

When I think of all the ways the Trump administration has attacked low-income and working families, I can't say I am surprised.

Last week, The Washington Post reported that Puerto Rico was forced to start cutting its Nutrition Assistance Program, NAP, benefits. Puerto Rico's food assistance program is funded by a capped block grant separate from SNAP. While other Federal nutrition programs like WIC and school meals operate in Puerto Rico the same as in other States and territories, Puerto Rico remains disadvantaged because their Nutrition Assistance Program funds are static.

In order to receive nutrition assistance in Puerto Rico, you have to have a lower income—to receive less assistance—than someone who lives on the mainland. It also limits the program's flexibility to respond to changes in demand. When the hurricane struck, additional funds had to be given to NAP to accommodate more participants.

These forced cuts will reduce Puerto Rico's food assistance benefits by 25 percent for 1.3 million people. That is 43 percent of Puerto Rico's population. While it is true that this cut will restore the overall benefit amount to where it was before the hurricane, we must remember that these participants

often need more assistance, given the circumstances. It is not easy to rebuild your entire life on an empty stomach.

Mr. Speaker, on more than one occasion, House Democrats have asked for an additional \$600 million to help Puerto Rico through this rough patch, only to be shut down by the President and his misplaced, ill-informed prejudices toward Puerto Rico. Even Leader MCCONNELL seems to be helping the President do his dirty work by refusing to take up the supplemental appropriations bill that we sent to the Senate during the shutdown in January, probably because it would force them to address relief funds for Puerto Rico.

Pulling out the rug from beneath Puerto Rico does not solve the problem; it creates a bigger one. This won't disappear. That is why I urge my colleagues in the U.S. Senate to appropriate an additional \$600 million for Puerto Rico's Nutrition Assistance Program.

I also urge my colleagues in the House to support these funds and speak out on this issue. The least we can do is empathize with our fellow Americans who are recovering from a natural disaster.

It doesn't happen overnight. It doesn't take months. It takes years to recover from the devastation that Hurricane Maria caused, and Puerto Rico has continued to fight and advocate for disaster funds, unlike States on the mainland.

Time is running out, and we can't allow these cuts to continue. This is a moral question for all of us here in this Chamber. This is about how are we going to treat our fellow citizens in Puerto Rico.

It is all on us to act. It is all on us to end hunger now.

CELEBRATING NATIONAL AGRICULTURE WEEK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today, during National Agriculture Week, to celebrate American farmers and farm families.

This nationwide effort recognizes and celebrates the abundance provided by American agriculture. It also reminds citizens that agriculture is a part of all of us and plays a critical economic and food security role.

Thursday is National Ag Day, which began in 1973 as a way to increase public awareness of agriculture's role in society. National Ag Day encourages every American to understand how food and fiber products are produced; appreciate the role agriculture plays in providing safe, abundant, and affordable products; value the essential role of agriculture in maintaining a strong economy; and acknowledge and consider career opportunities in the agriculture, food, and fiber industries.

In the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, we are fortunate to have more than 58,000 farmers. These men and women are the lifeline of the Commonwealth, as agriculture is our number one industry.

Our farmers produce a safe and abundant food supply, including our dairy farmers, who produce the milk that is stocked in the cases of our supermarkets and in lunchrooms across America.

My bill, the Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act, would further expand milk choices in our schools. It would allow for whole milk, both flavored and unflavored, to be offered in school cafeterias.

Mr. Speaker, milk was once a staple in the diets of our students, but consumption in schools has dramatically decreased since the Healthy, Hunger-Free Act of 2010—which demonized milk fat, which is where nutrition and flavor is—was implemented.

Milk is the number one source of nine essential nutrients in the diets of many young Americans. We can provide the foundation for a solid, healthy lunch in our schools that also tastes great and students will want to drink.

When students don't consume milk, they are not getting nutrients such as calcium, potassium, and vitamin D.

I urge my colleagues to cosponsor the Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act, and National Agriculture Week is the perfect time to sign on to this important legislation.

Mr. Speaker, we know that farmers feed; nutrition matters; and agriculture plays a critical role in modern society. I would like to thank all Americans who work tirelessly in the ag sector. On behalf of a grateful Nation, we thank you.

CYBERSECURITY SKILLS INTEGRATION

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1592, the Cybersecurity Skills Integration Act.

As co-chair of the House Career and Technical Education Caucus, I am

proud that we continue to provide the resources necessary to have a dominant and prosperous workforce. For instance, this past July, we authorized the Carl D. Perkins Act to advance career and technical education.

We must continue developing a 21st century workforce to meet the technical demands our country is facing now and into the future. That is why, together with my friend, Congressman JIM LANGEVIN, we have introduced a bill to help protect our sensitive data and critical infrastructure from bad actors.

Our legislation directs the Department of Education to create a comprehensive grant program that integrates cybersecurity education into new and established postsecondary CTE programs.

With more than 16 critical infrastructure sectors in our country, we must prepare our next generation of learners to have the most sophisticated and comprehensive educational programs to protect our Nation's most dire assets, systems, and networks.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill, and I thank Mr. LANGEVIN for his work and leadership on this issue.

EPA'S DECISION ON REDWOOD CITY SALT PONDS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SPEIER) for 5 minutes.

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, I am outraged, but not surprised, that the political appointees in the EPA's Washington, D.C., office have decided that the Redwood City salt ponds in my district do not include waters of the United States under the Clean Water Act.

This administration has completely hijacked the jurisdictional process away from the experts on the ground, putting politics ahead of science. No surprise.

Stunningly, after experts at the EPA's Region 9 had drafted a determination in 2016 that came to a completely opposite conclusion, the EPA trampled on that evidence-based determination.

The administration was, no doubt, counting on the fact that the draft would not be released to the public. Well, I am not willing to allow that to happen.

Let the RECORD reflect that, after being designated an EPA special case, Region 9 experts conducted an extensive review of the property and finally concluded that 1,270 acres within the Redwood City salt ponds property are, in fact, waters of the United States for the following reasons.

First, the tidal channels within the property were part of the traditionally navigable waters of the San Francisco Bay and were not converted to "fast land" or "dry solid upland" prior to the enactment of the Clean Water Act. This is because waters that have been severed from tidal influence but are regularly inundated are not fast lands.

Secondly, the salt ponds in their current condition have been shown to be navigable in the past and could be used in interstate or foreign commerce with reasonable improvements, such as removing levees. In fact, large portions of former salt ponds in proximity to the site have been restored to tidal marshes.

Third, the salt ponds are impoundments of water otherwise defined as waters of the United States.

Finally, the salt ponds have significant nexus to the traditionally navigable waters of the adjacent San Francisco Bay, providing food and habitat to certain species of microorganisms, invertebrates, and birds.

The most recent EPA determination directly contradicts the findings of Region 9 experts, but it is completely in line with this administration's record of gutting environmental protections in the name of corporate interests.

I realize that this administration struggles to recognize any body of water that is not a murky, scum-filled swamp, but I refuse to let this 180-degree political flip-flop occur without public disclosure. Believe me, the decision by Administrator Wheeler is a flop. That is why I am submitting this draft determination in its entirety for the public record.

DRAFT REDWOOD CITY SALT PONDS JD

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document constitutes the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) determination of the federal jurisdictional status of the Redwood City Salt Ponds for purposes of the Clean Water Act (CWA). This CWA jurisdictional determination applies to the Redwood City Salt Ponds property ("Redwood City Salt Ponds" or "the Property") depicted in Figure 1. The Property is approximately 1,365 contiguous acres adjacent to Westpoint Slough, a part of San Francisco Bay, located near Seaport Boulevard, Redwood City, San Mateo County, California. Within the boundaries of the subject area, approximately 95 acres of the Property are not "waters of the United States" where they are above the High Tide Line on the outer side of the perimeter levees bounding the Property, and above the Ordinary High Water Mark on the levee interiors. These non-jurisdictional areas consist of levees, building pads and other features converted to fast land before passage of the CWA.

The remaining estimated 1,270 acres within the subject area are "waters of the United States" as defined by the CWA, because: (1) the tidal channels within the Redwood City Salt Ponds were part of the traditionally navigable waters of San Francisco Bay, and were not converted to fast land prior to enactment of the CWA; (2) the salt ponds in their current condition have been shown to be navigable in fact, and are susceptible to use in interstate or foreign commerce with reasonable improvements; (3) the salt ponds are impoundments of waters otherwise defined as waters of the United States; and (4) the salt ponds have a significant nexus to the traditionally navigable waters of the adjacent San Francisco Bay.

Complete text can be found on <https://speier.house.gov/media-center/press-releases>